IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of charging a vertical tube ~~(1)~~ having an internal diameter of 50 mm or less with catalyst particles ~~(2)~~, which comprises

- introducing a filling aid ~~(3)~~ into the vertical tube ~~(1)~~,

where the filling aid comprises a flexible elongated body and ~~the~~ a ratio of the cross section of the flexible elongated body to the cross section of the tube ~~(1)~~ is from 0.003 to 0.08, and

(1) the filling aid has no elements which extend radially outward from the flexible body ~~and whose projection onto a plane perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid has a larger area than the cross section of the flexible body~~ or,

(2) the filling aid comprises spacers which are arranged at a distance from one another and extend perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid, wherein the projection of the spacers onto a plane perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid has no llarger area than a cross section of the flexible body, and the filling aid has no other elements than said spacers, which extend radially outward from the flexible body;

- introducing the catalyst particles ~~(2)~~ into the tube ~~(1)~~, and

- withdrawing the filling aid ~~(3)~~ during introduction of the catalyst particles ~~(2)~~ so that the lower end of the filling aid is always above the fill height of the catalyst particles ~~(2)~~ in the tube ~~(1)~~.

Claim 2 (Original): The method according to claim 1, wherein the flexible elongated body has an essentially circular cross section.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The method according to claim 2, wherein the ratio of the diameter of the flexible elongated body to the diameter of the tube ~~(1)~~ is from 0.005 to 0.07.

Claim 4 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the flexible elongated body comprises a textile string or a textile tape.

Claim 5 (Cancelled)

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, wherein the filling aid ~~(3)~~ ~~further~~ comprises spacers ~~(5)~~ which are arranged at ~~a~~ the distance from one another and extend perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid, wherein the projection of the spacers onto the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid has no larger area than the cross section of the flexible body, and the filling aid has no other elements than said spacers, which extend radially outward from the flexible body ~~(3)~~.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): The method of claim 1, which comprises successively:

- introducing the filling aid ~~(3)~~ into the tube ~~(1)~~ in such a way that the lower end of the filling aid ~~(3)~~ is located at a first height,

- introducing catalyst particles ~~(2)~~ into the tube ~~(1)~~ to below the first height,

- optionally, partly withdrawing the filling aid ~~(3)~~ from the tube ~~(1)~~ so that the lower end of the filling aid ~~(3)~~ is located at a second or further height and introducing catalyst particles ~~(2)~~ into the tube ~~(1)~~ to below the second or further height,

- withdrawing the filling aid (3) completely from the tube ~~(1)~~ and filling the tube ~~(1)~~ with catalyst particles up to the final fill height.

Claim 8 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 1, wherein the catalyst particles comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.

Claim 10 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 2, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 3, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 12 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 4, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 7, wherein the catalyst particles comprise shaped bodies which comprise a catalytically active composition.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 2, wherein the catalyst particles comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.

Claim 17 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 3, wherein the catalyst particles comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.

Claim 18 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 4, wherein the catalyst particles comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 5, wherein the catalyst particles comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.

Claim 20 (Previously Presented): The method of claim 6, wherein the catalyst particles comprise a catalytic composition applied in the form of a shell to an inert support.

Claim 21 (New): A method of charging a vertical tube having an internal diameter of 50 mm or less with catalyst particles, which comprises

- introducing a filling aid into the vertical tube, where the filling aid comprises a flexible elongated body and a ratio of the cross section of the flexible elongated body to the cross section of the tube is from 0.003 to 0.08,
- introducing the catalyst particles into the tube, and

- withdrawing the filling aid during introduction of the catalyst particles so that the lower end of the filling aid is always above the fill height of the catalyst particles in the tube,

wherein the filling aid comprises a rigid terminating element whose density is greater than that of the flexible body, and

(1) the filling aid does not comprise other elements which extend radially outward from the flexible body, or

(2) the filling aid comprises spacers which are arranged at a distance from one another and extend perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid, wherein the projection of the spacers onto a plane perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid has no larger area than a cross section of the flexible body, and the filling aid has no other elements than said spacers and the rigid terminating element, which extend radially outward from the flexible body.

Claim 22 (New): The method of claim 21, wherein the filling aid does not comprise other elements which extend radially outward from the flexible body.

Claim 23 (New): The method of claim 21, wherein the filling aid comprises spacers which are arranged at the distance from one another and extend perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid, wherein the projection of the spacers onto the plane perpendicular to the longitudinal direction of the filling aid has no larger area than the cross section of the flexible body, and the filling aid has no other elements than said spacers and the rigid terminating element, which extend radially outward from the flexible body.

Claim 24 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein the filling aid has no elements which extend radially outward from the flexible body.

Claim 25 (New): The method of claim 1, wherein a bulk density of the packed catalyst and a pressure drop is lower than the bulk density and the pressure drop of a free-fall method of charging the vertical tube having the internal diameter of 50 mm or less with the catalyst particles.

Claim 26 (New): The method of claim 21, wherein a bulk density of the packed catalyst and a pressure drop is lower than the bulk density and the pressure drop of a free-fall method of charging the vertical tube having the internal diameter of 50 mm or less with the catalyst particles.